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ABSTRACT

The internal assessment process described in this report was initiated at the Wilmington/Stanton Campus of Delaware Technical and Community College in 1985 in preparation for a reaccreditation study and in response to a climate of rapid internal and external change. Following introductory comments on the campus, the purpose of the internal assessment is detailed and the roles played by the campus director, the steering committee, the Temple University team, the president's office, and the administrative council are described. Next, the two models used in the assessment design are explained; i.e., the diagnostic model which focused on cyclical changes in the technical, cultural, and political systems of the organization; and the survey-guided action research model, which focused on the college's environment, mission/strategy/objectives, tasks, employees, organizational structure, emergent networks, and output. Samples of data collection instruments are provided along with a discussion of steps in study design and implementation. Finally, the outcomes of the internal study are examined, including: (1) the integration of strategic planning into the organizational structure; (2) the integration of strategic planning into the accreditation reaffirmation process; (3) the inauguration of the planning committee as a problem-solving group; and (4) the initiation of a staff development program for the instructional division. (EJV)

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Internal Assessment As a First Step in Strategic Planning

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September 1, 1986

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INTRODUCTION

Founded in 1966 as a state-supported post-secondary institution, Delaware Technical and Community College offers a wide-range of Associate Degree and diploma programs in the three counties of Delaware. Policies and procedures governing the three campuses of the college are established by a citizen-based Board of Trustees and implemented and coordinated by the college president and his staff whose offices are located in the middle of the state. The organizational assessment described here took place between March and November of 1985 at the Wilmington/Stanton Campus in New Castle County, Delaware's northern and most heavily populated and industrialized county.

This two-site campus, united as a single administrative entity in 1976, consists of Stanton, located in a rapidly growing suburban region, and Wilmington, situated just a few blocks from the downtown section of Delaware's largest city. Campus enrollment in Fall, 1985, included 1396 full-time and 2670 part-time students. Among the campus' staff of 315, 103 are full-time teaching faculty. Of the 276 part-time instructional staff, 10% are teaching in a major retraining program for the local General Motors plant. A sampling of the 25 technologies or majors offered at this campus include civil, electrical, industrial, and mechanical engineering, data processing, business administration, human services, dental hygiene, and nursing. A variety of educational and training courses are presented both on-campus and at locations throughout New Castle County.

PURPOSE

Though the need for a better understanding of the Stanton-Wilmington Campus' internal environment had been articulated for some time, it was the conjunction of several events which served as the impetus for the Campus' chief administrator, John Jones, to commission the internal assessment. Perhaps the major trigger was that of the Middle States Reaffirmation of Reaccreditation Study slated for 1988.

Preparation for the campus' reaffirmation evaluation needed to begin in 1985 and Mr. Jones, who had held his position for only a year, felt that a systematic internal study would lend itself well to the goals of reaffirmation as well as provide him with additional information about the nature of the institution he led.

Through the President's Office, the individual campuses had been made aware of some important changes in the external environment. Like other American community colleges, Delaware's only community college was looking at a rapidly changing demographic, economic and social picture. The typical student profile was different from what it had been ten or even five years previously. The increase in part-time and decline in full-time students became a concern. Industrial training and retraining program were accelerating while more traditional enrollments were either leveling off or decreasing. To use Emery and Trist's (1973) expression: the external environment was seen as turbulent.

Change was evidenced most dramatically at the Campus by two simultaneous events. With the implementation of tuition retention, the College converted its funding base from total to partial reliance on state monies.

Though all campuses were affected by this change in funding, an event particular to the northern campus occurred. The Wilmington site was expanded with the addition of a $9.5 million wing primarily to house a large and growing industrial training division. Risk and uncertainty were created by these two events.

One response to this turbulence and rapid change was the formation of several college-wide committees committed to examining the issues of marketing, recruitment, and retention. These task forces gathered data and made recommendations crucial to the continued success of the institution. The creation of these groups was evidence of the instutiton's recognition that a proactive rather than reactive posture was needed in dealing with the future.

The activity of these groups on the Stanton/Wilmington Campus served not only the task at hand but acted as an important mechanism for creating awareness on the part of the staff that change was in the air and their involvement was necessary. An early assumption in planning the internal assessment was the voluntary participation of as many staff as possible in the gathering of information.

In responding to this climate of rapid change, planning for the future appeared inevitable. In developing an effective planning process, an assessment of the present state of the campus seemed the first logical step. John Jones' memo to the staff announcing the launching of the planning process sums up best the impetus and the major thrust of the internal assessment.

Excerpt from: Memo of March 28, 1985, by John H. Jones,
Vice President and Campus Director

> "We are in a period of significant change at the Stanton/Wilmington Campuses of Delaware Technical and Community College. Enrollment patterns are shifting; we are dependent on tuition income to pay our operating expenses; and we have a new building opening in March, 1986, in Wilmington.

Particularly in view of these changes we need to take control of our future, rather than let the 'futur happen to us.'

To achieve that goal we are about to launch a major, on-going planning process. It will begin with a needs assessment which will be conducted this spring, the results to be made available by the end of the quarter. Based on this information, we will organize our planning efforts to be instituted formally at in-service in August. A steering committee will oversee this process. The committee initially will meet with our needs assessment team and then guide the development of the planning process."

KEY PLAYERS

Once the purpose of the internal assessment was clear, the question of whom to involve in its design and implementation emerged. The development of a list of staff to be involved in this effort was made easier by groundwork Mr. Jones had done during his first year in office. He had actively solicited staff, including those with training in organizational development and planning, about their perceptions of the state of the campus. Several of those people polled became members of the Steering Committee. The key players described below include the CAMPUS DIRECTOR, the STEERING COMMITTEE, the TEMPLE TEAM, the PRESIDENT'S OFFICE, the ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL, the survey RESPONDENTS, and the PLANNING COMMITTEE.

CAMPUS DIRECTOR: The pivotal person in the internal assesment was the campus director, John Jones. The project was his idea and he provided important direction and guidance not only during the initial stages but also during the implementation phase. Moreover, his commitment to the process of critical analysis and planning remains unbated.

STEERING COMMITTEE: Central to the development of this process was the identification of a steering committee which would advise the Campus Director on the design and implementation strategies and serve a coordinative function with the group chosen to carry out the actual assessment. The six people chosen to serve on the Steering Committee represented the broad functional areas of the organization, including instruction, administrative services, student services, continuing education, and industrial training. **TEMPLE TEAM:** The decision to select a group external to the institution to carry out the internal assessment was made early. One member of the steering committee was involved in a doctoral program in organizational development at Temple University and enrolled in a class requiring fieldwork in an organization. This fieldwork requirement included organizational analysis, diagnosis and the implementation of an intervention, using state of the art behavioral science technology. The crucial role of the Temple Team is described further in the next section. **PRESIDENT'S OFFICE:** The President of the College, John R. Kotula and his staff from the President's Office have had a Three Year Plan, revised annually, in effect since 1978. The local study for local planning needs could be seen as part of this larger planning effort. The President's Office was supportive of the internal assessment, answering questions related to the campus-college relationship and providing essential computer advice and support during the data analysis phase. **ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL:** The campus' Administrative Council is comprised of top-level administrators, including the Deans of Instruction, Student Services, and Development, and the Directors of Continuing Education and Administrative Services. Although they played a low-key role during the internal assessment, they were critical to the success of one of the major outcomes which was the operation of the problem-solving group. The

Administrative Council was kept apprised of the progress of the project and their reactions to the process was solicited by the Campus Director

Two other groups played an important part in the internal assessment. They include the RESPONDENTS, those who answered the survey or were interviewed, and the PLANNING COMMITTEE, comprised of the representatives of staff involved in one of the interventions. More information on the role of these two groups is available in the following section.

INTERNAL ASSESSMENT DESIGN

The Temple consulting team used two models in the assessment design. Each had been developed by experienced consultants from private industry. Since the college was facing change in regard to market conditions (changing student patterns, changing job requirements for graduates), it was thought that the models were quite applicable. Also, no specifically designed models for internal assessment in higher education were available.

The diagnostic model by Noel Tichy (1983) was used to develop a means of looking at the college organization. The organization was seen as a dynamic entity involving missions, tasks, people, formal structure, organizational processes, and emergent networks. An important feature of the model was the assumption of cyclical change involving the three major systems of the organization: technical, cultural and political. Identifying which of these systems was at its low point was a major diagnostic goal. The components of each of these systems include:

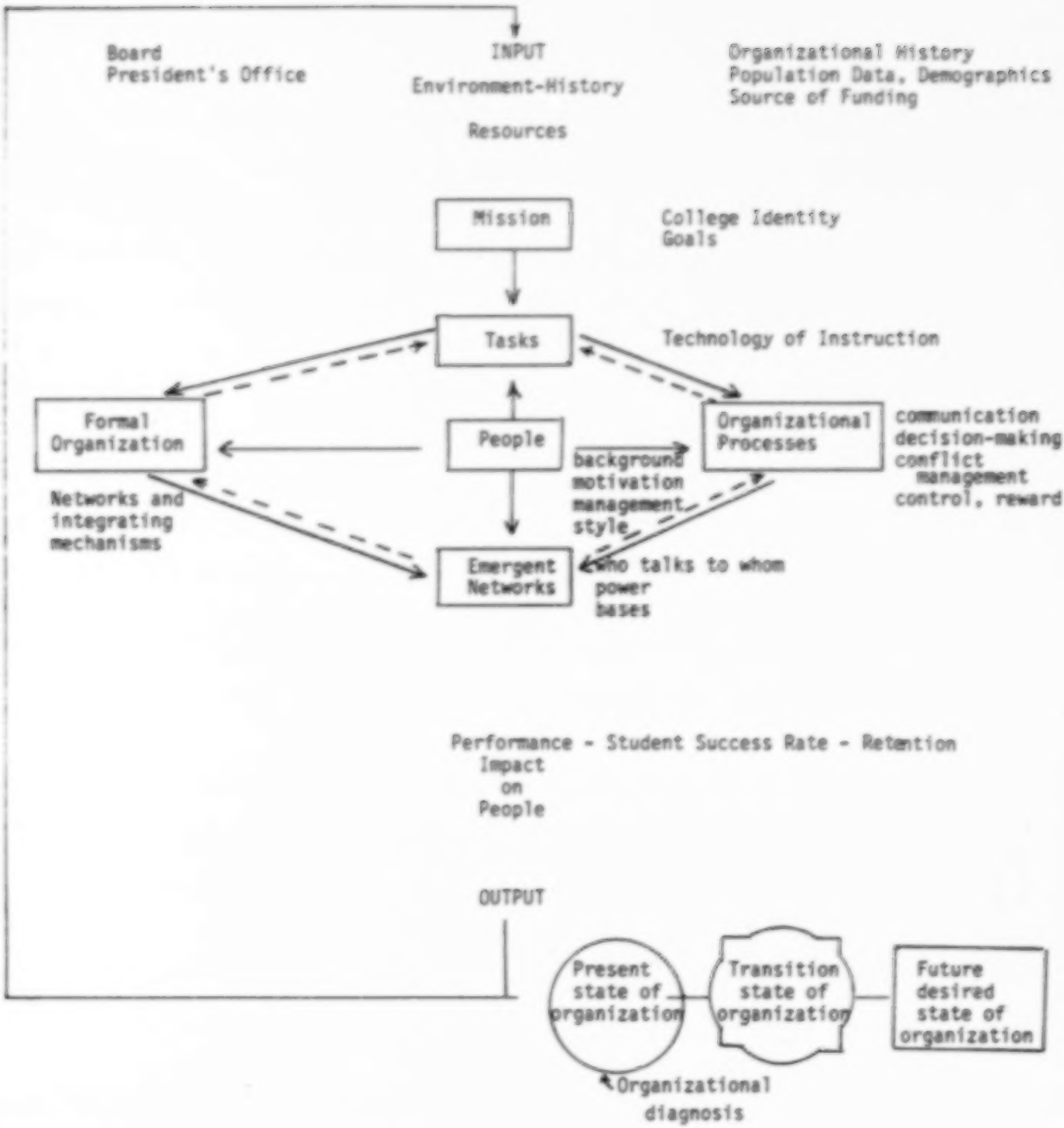
Technical System: technology, structure related to production; product development; productivity issues; technical management (efficiency and effectiveness).

Political System: promotion; rewards, shifts in power; external control (allocation problem--who gets ahead, who gets and controls things, who gets rewards).

Cultural System: performance and accountability; decision-making values; people-oriented values; management style.

Model principles were not published to the staff, but were used to organize the study and the format of the questionnaire and interviews:

MODEL


Board
President's Office
INPUT
Environment-History
Resources
Organizational History
Population Data, Demographics
Source of Funding
Mission
College Identity
Goals
Tasks
Technology of Instruction
Formal Organization
People
Organizational Processes
communication
decision-making
conflict
management
control, reward
background
motivation
management
style
Networks and integrating mechanisms
Emergent Networks
who talks to whom
power
bases
Performance - Student Success Rate - Retention
Impact
on
People
OUTPUT
Present state of organization
Transition state of organization
Future desired state of organization
Organizational diagnosis

Questionnaire Staff Data Form (Internal Assessment)

Please check the category that applies to you. This information will help in the data analysis.

1. Roles and Functions
   - ____Administration
   - ____Faculty
   - ____Counseling Staff
   - ____Secretarial/Clerical
   - ____Support Staff (Maintenance, Custodial, Security)

2. Status
   - ____Full-time
   - ____Part-time

3. Divisions
   - ____Administrative Services (Business Office, Maintenance, Custodial, Security)
   - ____Industrial Training (includes JTPA and related programs)
   - ____Continuing Education
   - ____Student Services
   - ____Instruction (includes LRC and Media Services)

4. Technology Areas
   - ____Business (AC, BA, OS, DP)
   - ____Allied Health (DH, DA, NU, RT, RL, NM)
   - ____Engineering (IE, ME, ED, EL, AD, CI, FT, PD)
   - ____Public Service (CO, PT, HS, CT)
   - ____Related Studies (English, ESL, Math, Social Science)

5. Campus Where You Work
   - ____Stanton
   - ____Wilmington

6. Years of Employment with the S/W Campuses
   - ____0-5
   - ____6-10
   - ____11-17

Sample page from the Questionnaire

DIRECTIONS: Please give your opinion in regard to each statement. For those which do not relate to your position at all, circle 7 (not applicable). Then answer the question again as you think the other people on your campus would answer the question. The comment space is for you to clarify your answer or give additional information.

	1 - Strongly Disagree	2 - Disagree	3 - Slightly Disagree	4 - Slightly Agree	5 - Agree	6 - Strongly Agree	7 - Not Applicable
I. MISSION/STRATEGY							
1. I see the Stanton/Wilmington Campuses as meeting the educational needs of the community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other people on my Campus would answer:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Comment:							
2. In my view, funding is at the right level to support my Campus programs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other people on my Campus would answer:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Comment:							
3. Our students can transfer easily to other colleges and universities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other people on my Campus would answer:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Comment:							
4. Tuition retention has changed the College in ways I do not like.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other people on my Campus would answer:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Comment:							
5. High school teachers and counselors think we provide high quality education at the S/W Campuses.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other people on my Campus would answer:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Comment:							
6. Stanton/Wilmington graduates are successful.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other people on my Campus would answer:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Comment:							
7. Enrollment is going down at the S/W Campuses.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other people on my Campus would answer:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Comment:							
8. Our graduates are as good or better than those of other two year institutions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other people on my Campus would answer:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Comment:							

I. Mission/Strategy

II. Tasks

III. Employees

IV. Organizational Structure and Processes

While it seemed almost irrelevant to speak about production, product development and productivity, it was quite clear to the Vice President and consulting team that these issues needed to be applied to the internal problems stimulated by a changing environment. For example, the college had changed from being completely state funded to a tuition retention system, thereby becoming partially self supporting.

The second model was the survey-guided action research model by Nadler (1977). Considering the large number of professional staff at the college and the evident desire by persons to be involved in the diagnosis, the consulting team chose a participative method. Initial problem identification began with the college steering committee. Assessment and data was shared with all personnel in problem-solving meetings. Team recommendations were given to representatives of all organizational levels in a waterfall design. This insured not only input to the process but open reporting of study results.

STUDY COMPONENTS

Environment

- Variety of Domains
- Stability
- Predictable Change

Mission/Strategy/Objectives

- Perceptions of Key People
- Rating of College Goals

Mission/Strategy/Objectives (Continued)

- Manager Strategies
- How are strategic decisions made

Tasks

- Interrelationship and Interdependence
- Who does what and how well--perceptions

Employees

- Managerial Style
- Managerial Competence

Organizational Structure & Process

- Characteristics of Communication
- Norms of Behavior of Conflict Management
- Decision-making--how participative, systematic, flexible

Emergent Networks

- Who Speaks to Whom
- Coalitions
- Cliques

Output

- Organizational Performance Over Time
- Comparison with Similar Institutions
- Level of Individuals' Satisfaction
- Goal Achievement--congruence with mission
- Appropriate Use of Resources

ASSESSMENT DESIGN

Action Research Model

1. Obtain problem - centered data to understand the environment:
   interviews with Steering Committee

2. Questionnaire and Interview Design - Tichy Model, Likert scale, Discrepancy design
3. Validation - steering committee, faculty, staff - 10 individuals
4. Implementation of Questionnaire
5. Data Analysis I - questionnaires and surveys
6. Feedback of data to all staff - Waterfall Design - problem-solving workshops
7. Data Analysis II - problems and solutions
8. Report to Steering Committee and Vice-President/Campus Director: Scenarious for implementing change

Two major assumptions: voluntary participation
confidentiality of data

ASSESSMENT IMPLEMENTATION

Staff at both campuses were surveyed at common meetings. The Vice President and Campus Director introduced the study at each meeting and asked the staff to participate by filling out the questionnaires created by the assessment team. For those who missed the meetings, a followup memo was sent to them by the Vice President inviting them to participate by completing questionnaires which were available at his offices. The full-time staff participation rate was 67%, compared with 13% of part-time staff. Only full-time staff responses were included in the data analysis. Staff participation was voluntary.

The team conducted interviews of 29% of full-time staff at all organizational levels. Interviews were carried out in response to requests by individuals and by virtue of position--department chair or administrator. Upon completion of the interviews, the study data were analyzed.

Questionnaire data were organized into percentages across responses (1-strongly disagree to 6-strongly agree) by staff level. Also reported were comments written after each question and section of the questionnaire.

Interview data were organized into frequencies of responses to interview questions. The questions had been developed in a structured interview format according to the Tichy model.

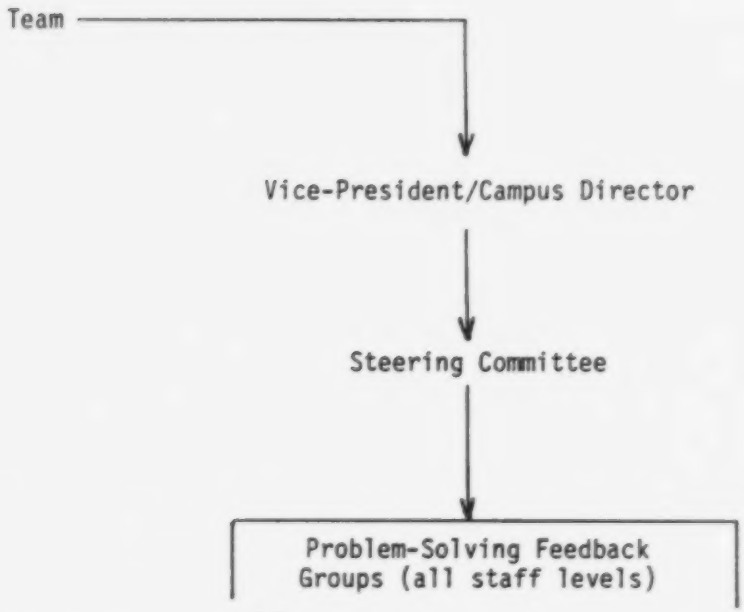
When data analysis was completed, reports of the outcomes were printed to be shared with staff. The assessment team met first with the Vice President and Campus Director, then with the Steering Committee to report results. Then Steering Committee members were trained to conduct problem-solving data feedback sessions with interested staff during the college in-service week. From these meetings were generated lists of prioritized problems and proposed solutions. It is important to note here that three sources of data: questionnaire, interviews, problem-solving sessions were developed by the team to help focus attention on issues.

The assessment team studied the problems and solutions lists, determined that the cultural cycle was at a low point, and created intervention scenarios for consideration by the Vice President and the Steering Committee. Once these scenarios were presented, the team was finished with its work. the next phase of intervention was conducted by the Steering Committee.

ASSESSMENT IMPLEMENTATION

1. Two meetings at each campus for questionnaire distribution and completion.
2. Follow-up: staff individually obtaining questionnaires
3. Interviews: administration, staff, planned and voluntary, by appointment.

WATERFALL FEEDBACK DESIGN



4. Statistical analysis of questionnaire--percentages across scale by level--full-time only--67% participation.
5. Analysis of interviews in relation to the Tichy model. 67/230 - 29% of full-time staff.
6. Feedback to staff--problem-solving design.
7. Data analysis--frequency county--problems and solutions.

OUTCOMES

The outcomes of the internal study to be examined here are those which appeared fairly early, i.e., within a year, are visible, and tangible. Consequences which are more intangible or difficult to define, less visible, long-term, or yet to emerge will be examined in future assessments. The outcomes described here, a year after the study, include:

--The integration of Strategic Planning Into the Organizational Structure

--The Integration of Strategic Planning Into the Reaffirmation Process

--Inauguration of the Planning Committee, A Problem-Solving Group

--Initiation of a Staff Development Program for the Instructional Division

Strategic Planning and the Organizational Structure

Members of the Administrative Council, constrained by time and the limits of their authority, tend to do tactical and operational planning which is short-term, usually a year in duration, and narrow in focus, that is, limited to their particular division. In order to more adequately meet the future, the need for strategic planning became apparent. This planning orientation is global in scope and long-term in outlook.

The internal assessment's steering committee became the Planning Council, which was charged by the Campus Director with developing and implementing a strategic planning process. That process is articulated in the Strategic Planning Manual which was written by the coordinator of the Planning Council and is currently being edited by the full Council. This manual was developed to articulate the stages of strategic planning, describe the work to be done at each stage, and train other staff and administration for involvement in the strategic plan.

The first step in strategic planning involves a situation audit which is a pulse-taking of the present and includes an assessment of both the internal and external environment. For example, the internal assessment described here is a part of this situational audit. A student survey conducted in the Spring Quarter, 1986, to assess attitudes towards non-instructional services for students and an instructional program audit. slated for the Fall of 1986 are other components of the situation audit Data about the external environment include labor market trends and the county's demographic configuration.

Then Mr. Jones formalized this group's role by adding the following to the campus' organization chart:

Campus Director

Administrative Council

Planning Council

Strategic Plan

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND REAFFIRMATION

Reaffirmation of this campus' accreditation by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, slated for Spring, 1988, requires much preparation prior to the evaluation

team's visit. This preparation involves the development of the Periodic Review Report, a document which is simultaneously a retrospective, an assessment of the campus' present situation, and a projection for the future. Middle States strongly emphasized the need for a planning component to this report, a requirement which can be met in part by the development of a strategic plan. The writer of the Periodic Review Report will integrate the Planning Council's work into this document. A related document and natural by-product of the Periodic Review Report is the Fact Book, a summary of timely and pertinent data about the campus and its staff. These relationships are graphically represented below:

		Periodic Review	Fact
Planning Council	Strategic Plan	Report	Book

THE PLANNING COMMITTEE AND PROBLEM-SOLVING

As important as it is to plan and prepare for the future, the need to cope with present realities is also strong. Since concerns and problems were identified in the internal audit, the Steering Committee (now Planning Council) and Vice President/Campus Director saw the need to inaugurate an issues-oriented group comprised of representatives from each of the functional areas. Because of concerns about possibly creating discomfort in subordinates serving on the committee, the two representatives from the Administrative Council elected not to serve. With a representative from each of the two sites for each of the twelve areas, and six members of the Planning Council attending, 30 people came to the first meeting which was devoted to establishing structure and ground rules.

Though attendance has fluctuated, meetings of the Planning Committee have been held regularly since early December, usually twice a month. It

was initially assumed that the best design for the Committee, because of its size, would be a series of sub-committees or task forces working independently and coming together periodically to report on their work and make decisions affecting the larger group. Instead, the group functions as a whole. The positive cooperative climate and the enthusiastic focusing on task have been strong enough to overcome the difficulties of problem-solving in such a large group.

As a problem-solving group, the Committee identifies concerns of members, drawing upon the survey data in addition to information from other sources. A target problem is selected by consensus and causes are identified which sometimes involves additional data-gathering by members. With this information, solutions are brain-stormed, analyzed, and selected. Recommendations are sent to the Vice President who, after consulting with the Administrative Council, responds to the Committee's suggestions.

The first problem addressed, dealing with the implementation of vacation and sick leave, received a positive response from the Campus Director. It lead to the identification of a more general issue, which has to do with human resource development on the Campus. The implementation of the Committee's recommendation on that issue is still in the analysis stage and a task force has been assigned by the Committee to gather data on a complex aspect of that issue. The group continues to meet, monitoring the progress of present concerns and identifying additional problems requiring their attention.

Though the specific nature of the relationship between the Planning Council and the Planning Committee is being worked out, the connection between the two is clear. The Planning Council coordinates the activities of the Committee and serves to facilitate the exchange between the Campus

Director and the Committee when recommendations are made by the latter. Indirectly, the Committee provides input into the strategic plan as it clarifies for the Council present concerns needing to be addressed to assure a more successful future for the institution. This linkage is graphically represented below:

Campus Director

Administrative Council

Planning Council

Planning Committee

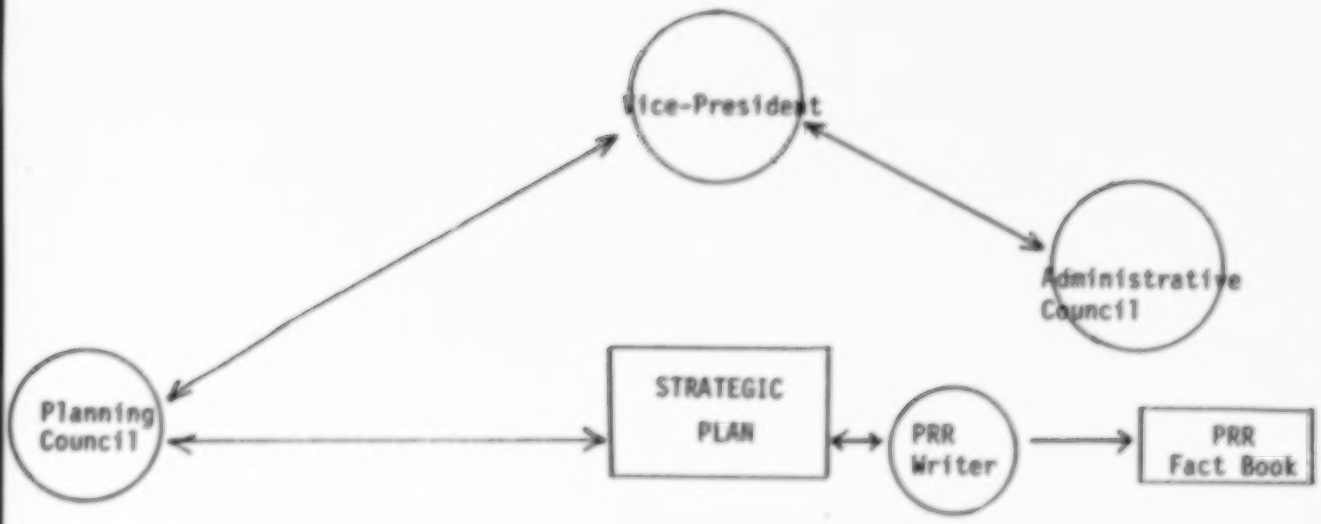
THE INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

With the realization that the campus' future success was dependent on a high-quality, productive staff, the Dean of Instruction designated a senior faculty person, who is also a member of the Planning Council, to coordinate a human resources development program, aimed primarily at full-time teaching faculty and department chairpersons. Data from the survey, anecdotal information from support staff and faculty, and personnel concerns expressed by the two assistant deans of instruction were all part of the staff development needs assessment.

Based on the information from the needs assessment, staff development has two major thrusts at the present time. The first is to clarify the role of the departmental chairs and assist them in identifying and solving common problems. In order to accomplish these tasks, team-building has become part of the training design. The second effort involves integrating the results of the faculty evaluations, particularly those done by the departmental chair and the students, with individual staff development plans. Since the goal of evaluation is improvement of instruction, the information from

the evaluations is used to determine what remediation might be required and what rewards can be given for above average performance.

Periodic Review Report/Strategic Plan Structure



PRR - Periodic Review Report

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